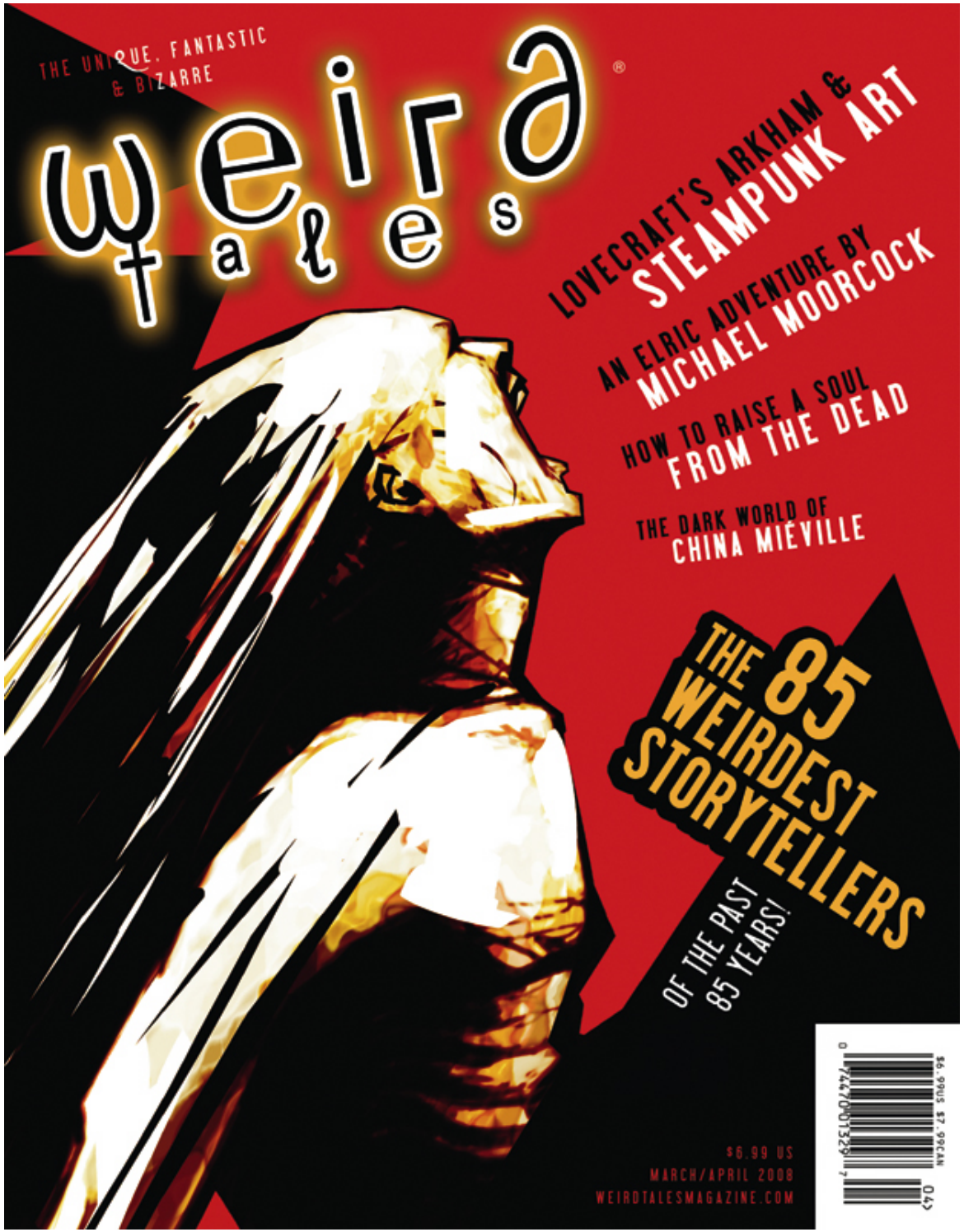
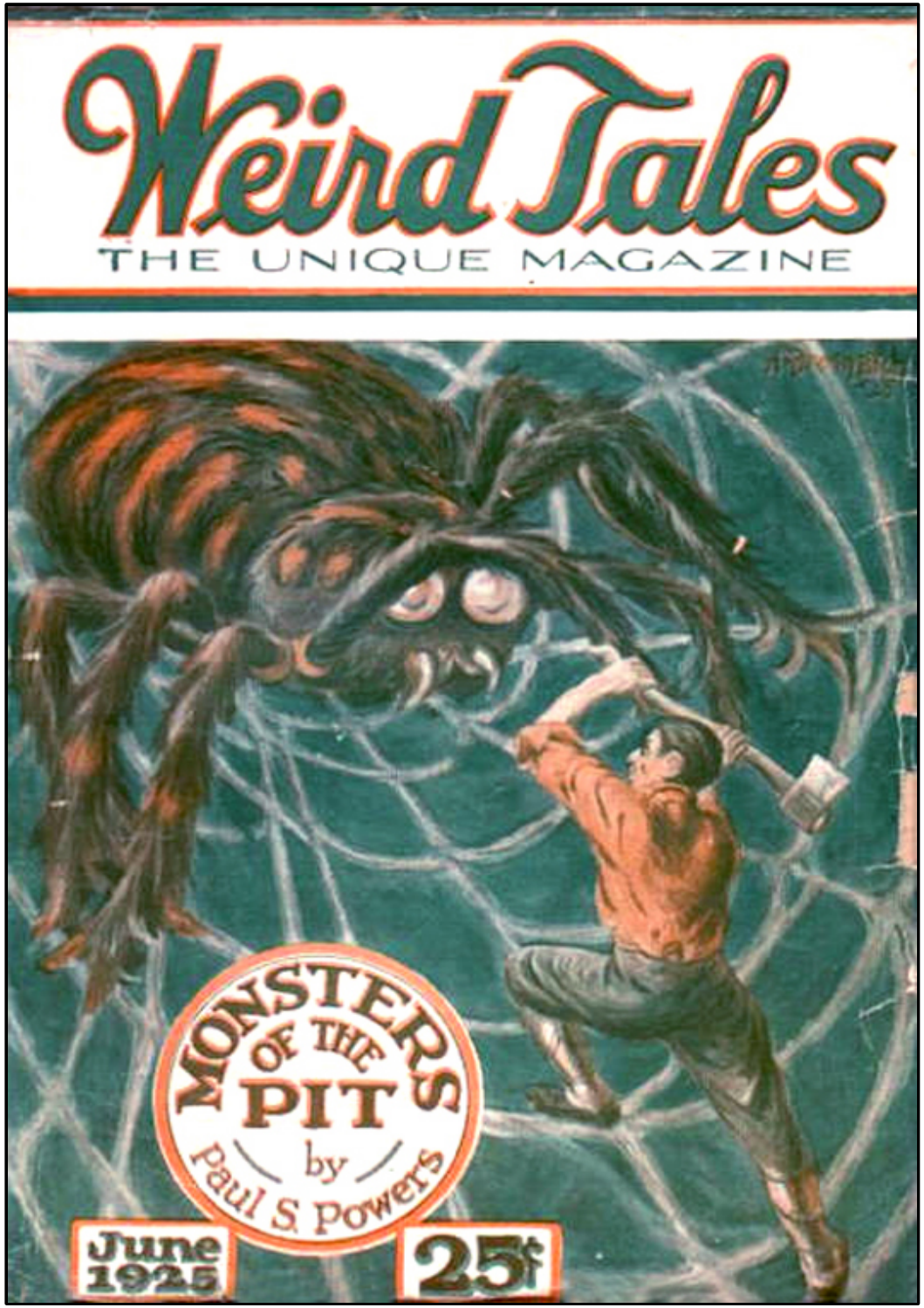


Weird Tales

85 years
of the unique,
fantastic &
bizarre



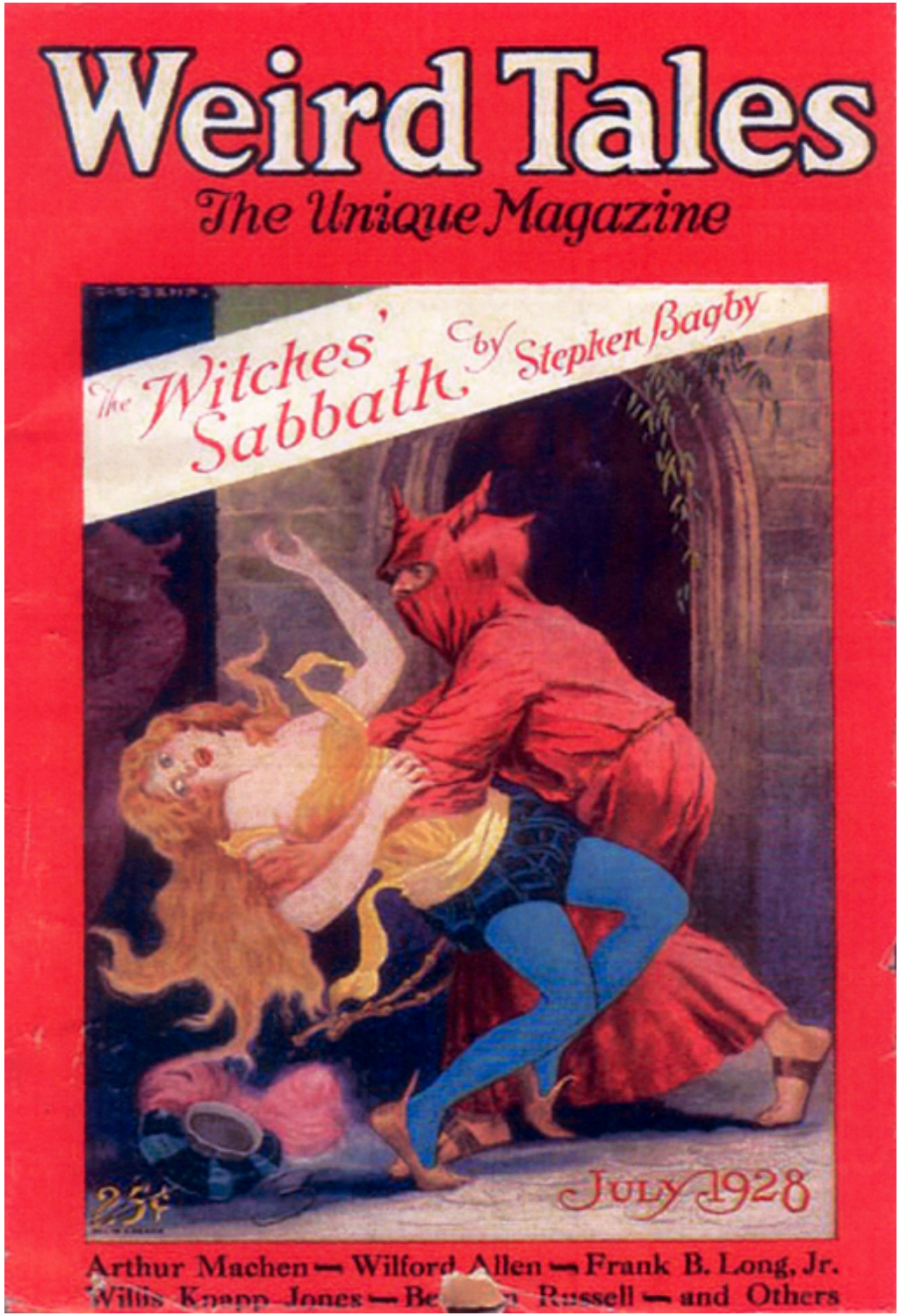
Origins

Launched 1923

Mission: to serve “readers who appreciate the weird, the bizarre, the unusual...”

Birth of the mass-media fantasy/SF/horror industry

Connected pulp-fiction biz with literary tradition of Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Shelley, Poe, Verne



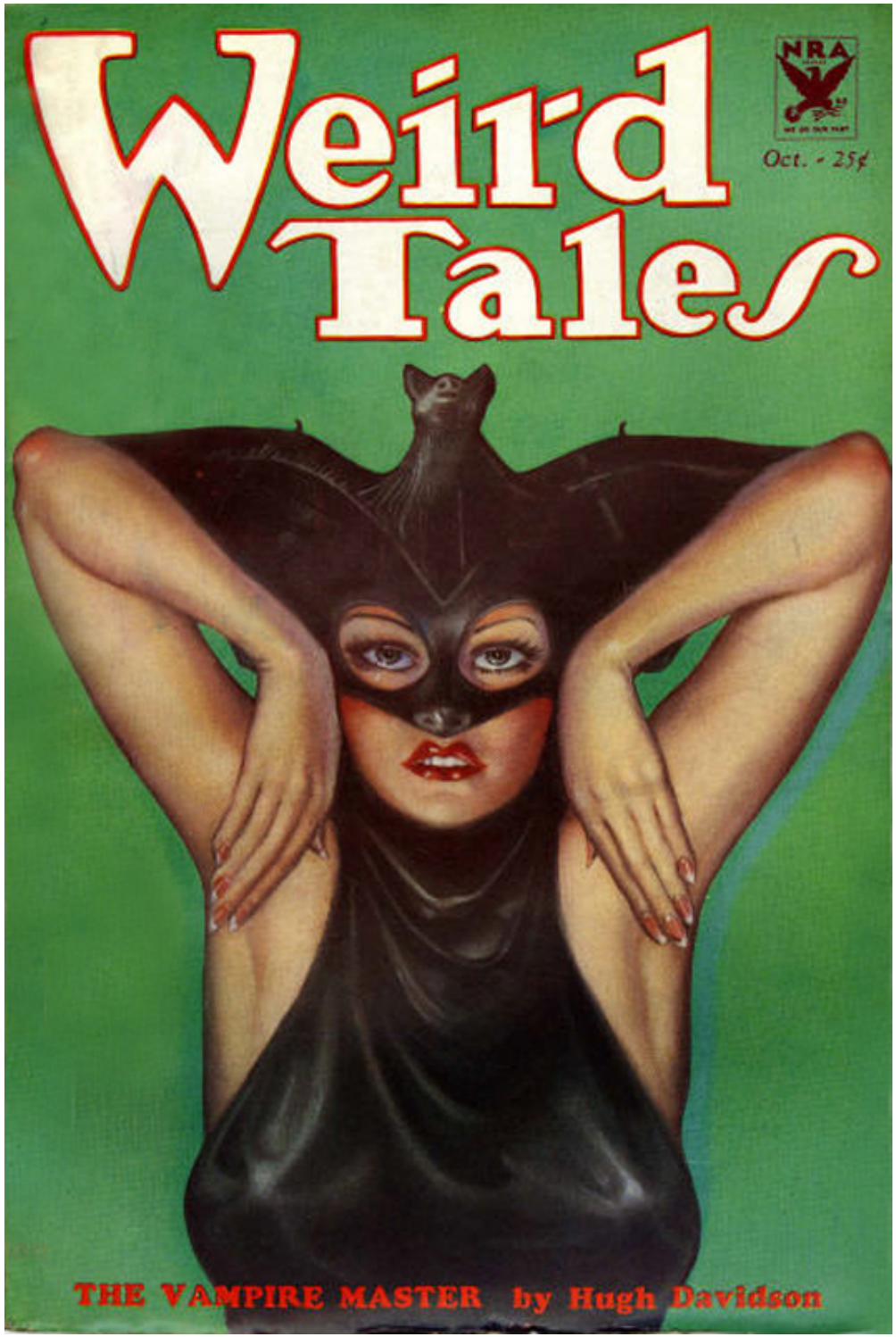
Birthing the Genre

Establishing framework

Lunatics, werewolves, pirates, killer fungus, evil cults, ancient lost tribes, interplanetary good vs. evil, voodoo, necrophilia, ghosts, sea serpents, mad scientists, woodsmen, witches... and that was all before 1928!

Popular contributors

Seabury Quinn, Manly Wade Wellman, Robert Bloch, Catherine E. Moore, Henry Kuttner, Greye La Spina, Frank Belknap Long, G.G. Pendarves, Mary Elizabeth Counselman, E. Hoffman Price, Edmond Hamilton



1930s Heyday

Editor Farnsworth Wright
Blended the brilliantly crazy and the engagingly commercial

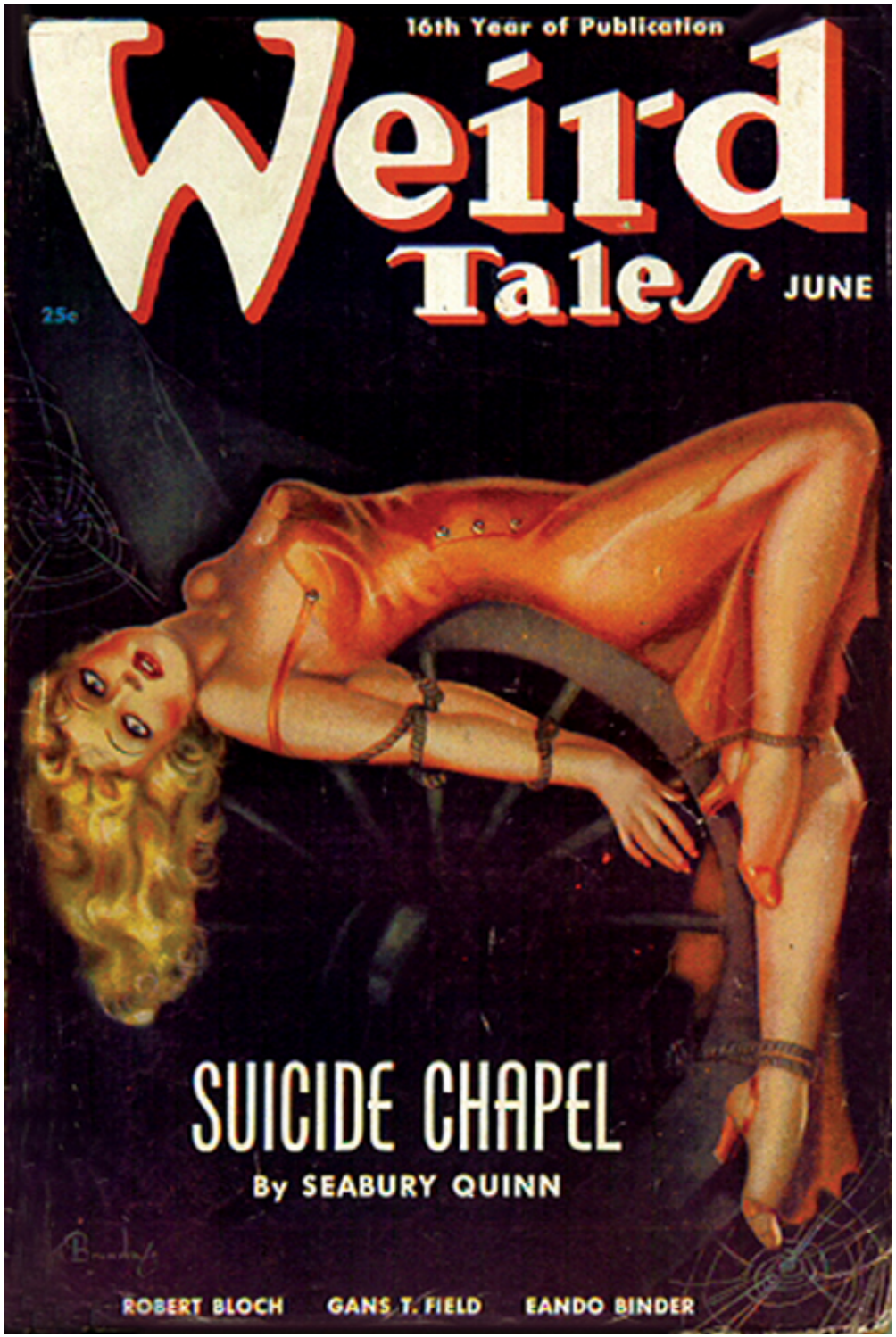
H.P. Lovecraft
Cosmic horror of the Cthulhu mythos

Robert E. Howard
Sword & sorcery w/ Conan et al.

Clark Ashton Smith
Dark worldbuilding & fantasy poetry

Margaret Brundage
Lush & controversial cover art

Virgil Finlay
Unbelievably intricate black & white illustrations

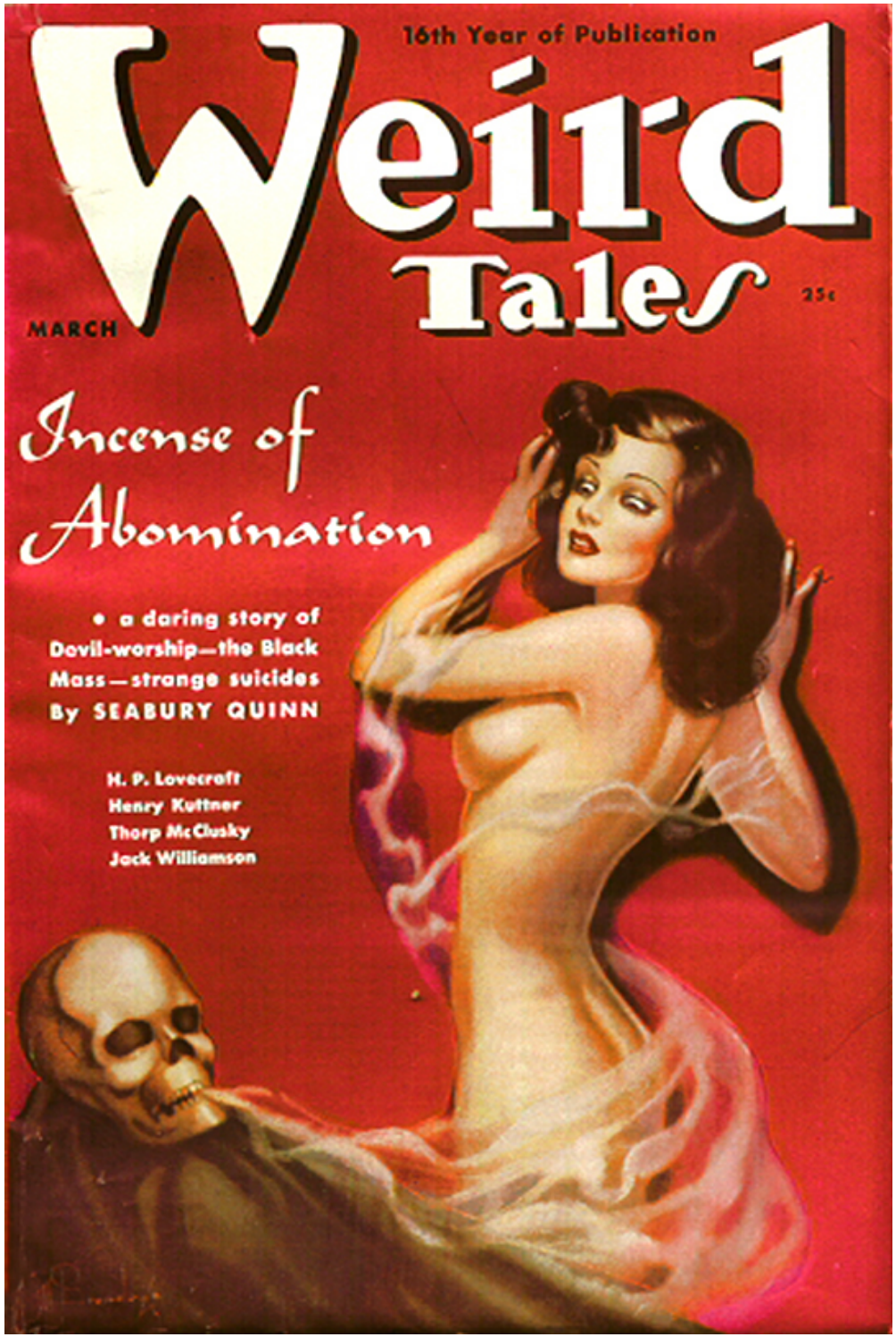


The Covers

Brundage's fetish-fashion art always most successful & talked about

Set the stage for enduring link between SF fandom and gothic fetish crowd

(Likewise: Weird Tales great Ray Bradbury made the connection between SF and tattoos in “Illustrated Man” and “Something Wicked”)



The Covers

Brundage's art not just sexy — also perfectly designed for magazine covers, unlike many pulps

Strong central figures with physical tension

Bright, limited palettes: one powerful main color

Room for real headlines

Adds up to great covers; trying to replicate today

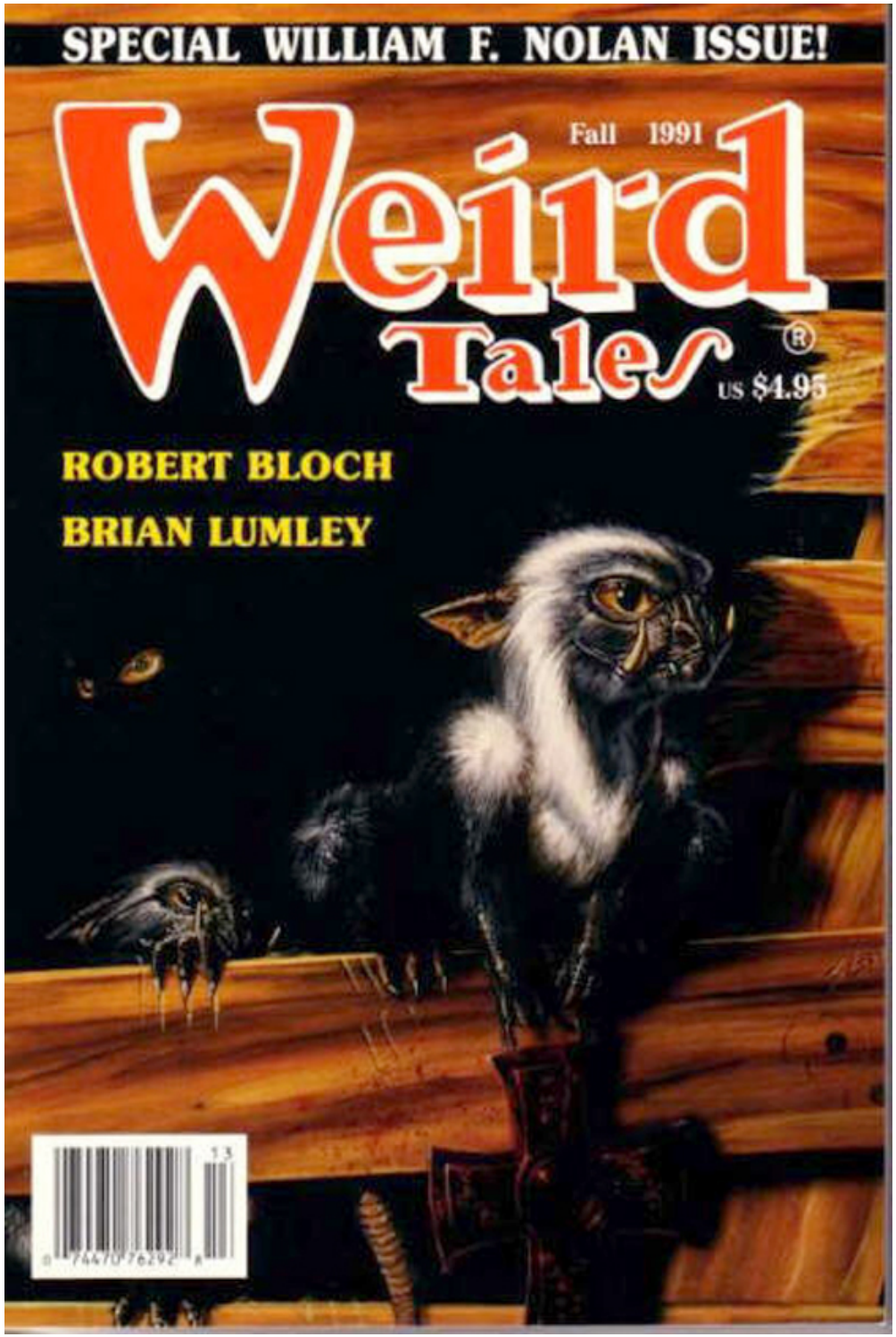
Fantasy for everyone

Unlike pulp SF magazines, Weird Tales always had strong female presence

1920s: Greye La Spina: WT's first werewolf classic, “Invaders from the Dark”

1930s: C.L. Moore: first heroine of sword & sorcery, Jirel of Joiry

1940s: Dorothy McIlwraith: first woman fantasy-magazine editor?



Resurrection

Brief attempts to revive throughout '60s and '70s

Finally relaunched for good in the '80s

Published newer weird authors: Stephen King, Thomas Ligotti, Gene Wolfe, Tanith Lee, Jeff VanderMeer, Michael Bishop, etc.

Several small-press publishers before latest acquisition in 2005

The New Era

Same weird mission,
new weird generation

As freaky in the 2000s
as it was in the 1930s

Writers and artists from
all across world culture

Remembering Lovecraft
etc. but bringing new
& exciting sorts of
weirdness every issue

85th Anniversary

Legendary authors & memorable debuts

85 Weirdest Storytellers of the Past 85 Years

Events throughout 2008

Library of Congress
New York Comic Convention
World Science Fiction Con
Dragon*Con

The Future

August '08
International issue

October '08
Various Halloween fun

January '09
Edgar Allan Poe's
200th birthday

Stuff to come: The Bazaar, more strange visual stories, more new online content including weird music and historical archives